

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
ATHENS DIVISION

UNITED STATES SURETY CO.,

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Plaintiff,

*

vs.

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CASE NO. 3:21-CV-17 (CDL)

SOLIDSCAPES, LLC, and JACOB
TRITES,

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*

Defendants.

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O R D E R

The Court previously granted Plaintiff's motion for default judgment but directed Plaintiff to file a separate motion for attorney's fees because the documents Plaintiff provided to the Court were insufficient to determine whether Plaintiff's claimed fees and costs were reasonable. Plaintiff filed a motion for attorney's fees with the appropriate accompanying documents, claiming that it is entitled to \$61,367.38 in fees and costs. This matter is now ripe for the Court's review.

Plaintiff's claimed legal fees and expenses are reasonable.¹ Plaintiff's complaint alleges that it is contractually entitled to

¹ In assessing the reasonableness of claimed attorney's fees, the Court uses the lodestar analysis. The lodestar "is the number of hours reasonably expended on the litigation multiplied by a reasonable hourly rate." *Ela v. Destefano*, 869 F.3d 1198, 1203 (11th Cir. 2017) (quoting *Bivins v. Wrap It Up, Inc.*, 548 F.3d 1348, 1350 (11th Cir. 2008) (per curiam)). There is "a 'strong presumption' that the lodestar is the reasonable sum the attorneys deserve." *Id.* (quoting *Bivins*, 548 F.3d at 1350).

attorney's fees and costs related to Plaintiff's efforts in investigating and settling claims against the bond Plaintiff issued and in filing the motion for default judgment. By failing to answer Plaintiff's complaint, Defendants admit the allegations. Accordingly, Plaintiff is entitled to recover its attorney's fees and expenses of litigation. Plaintiff's claimed hourly rates for the attorneys working on this matter - \$350 per hour for a partner with 45 years of experience and \$255 per hour for associates with 10 or more years of experience - are reasonable. Having reviewed Plaintiff's detailed list of billed fees and costs, the Court finds them reasonable and necessary.

CONCLUSION

Plaintiff's motion for attorney's fees (ECF No. 16) is granted and final judgment shall be entered by the Clerk as follows: in favor of Plaintiff and against Defendants jointly and individually in the total amount of \$278,700.74, which consists of compensatory damages in the amount of \$217,333.46 plus attorney's fees and costs in the amount of \$61,367.38. Plaintiff shall also recover post-judgment interest on the judgment at the statutory rate.

IT IS SO ORDERED, this 28th day of February, 2022.

S/Clay D. Land

CLAY D. LAND

U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA